

DE LA SALLE BROTHERS

# INTER COM

Lasallian  
Family  
Magazine

#300Lasalle

# Youth

in Words & Images

151

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All of the photos and texts of Intercom 151 are the work of young Lasallians from around the world.



**Cover photo.** International Council of Young Lasallians (ICYL), from left to right: Keane Palatino, Ed-Linddi Ong, Eleonora Munaretto, Brother Bako Aymard, Sarah Laitinen. Absent: Brother José Eliécer Muñoz Pérez.



**Intercom 151 - June 2018.** De La Salle Brothers – Lasallian Family Magazine.  
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#SomosLaSalle | #WeAreLaSalle | #NousSommesLaSalle

This blank space is for you! It gives you the opportunity to share through all the social media of lasalle.org. As an international community our diversity is the treasure we can share through paper and pixels. What would you like to share?



In your hand or on your screen you have the newest edition of our magazine. This issue is the work of young people through their word and photography. It is they who tell us their hopes and fears. This is an edition to read slowly and observe carefully. They are the young people who confront and encourage us.

And in these months ahead that will renew our spirit of optimism for the commemoration of the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of our Founder, let us take the opportunity that this celebration gives us to enliven our hearts, our commitment and our life, which, thanks to our beautiful educational charism, always remains young despite the passage of time.

And by the way, have you heard, sung and danced to the #300LaSalle song yet? If you have not done so, we invite you to watch the video in the following link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMYAAX8LWfs>

Live Jesus in our hearts! Forever!



Br. Alexander Gonzalez, FSC

Secretary – Coordinator Communication & Technology Services  
Casa Generalizia - Rome



## Seeing beauty in the mundane.

The jeepney is the most iconic public utility vehicle used in the Philippines. Despite its bad reputation regarding its smoke belching that contributes to the country's pollution and inefficiency when it comes to the Philippine traffic, the jeepney is considered a national heritage because it represents the beauty, adaptability and colorful culture of the country. The Filipino youth seem to ignore the beauty and diversity of the Philippines despite its loud and sketchy appearance. Through the youth's fondness in fashion, this aims to show the beauty in the mundane.

**Danish Fernandez**

**18 years old**

**Philippines, Manila City**

De La Salle University







## **FRATERNITY WITHOUT FRONTIERS: A DREAM WE WANT TO REALIZE**

*Dear religious leaders of the world,*

*We are Anca and Andreea, students of the Technological Lycée "St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle" in Pildești, Romania, and we are pleased to be able to write this open letter to you. In it, we want to tell you about one of the values that we Lasallians think is very important, namely the value of fraternity.*

*We live in a world in which we see every day news bulletins that present a picture of a society marked by suffering, misunderstanding and disunion, but in which the principal actors are all human beings and children of the same God whom we call Our Father. This picture saddens us, but it does not dishearten us. We dream of a world where every young person will have the chance to live in a situation in which differences of race, ethnicity and religion are not barriers to having the experience of fraternity.*

*In this year of grace 2017, we call with confidence on your wisdom, equilibrium, influence and your power of persuasion over the members of the religions that you lead, and we ask you to help us make our message become a living reality. It is high time for the value of fraternity to be lived with greater conviction by all men and women, regardless of race, ethnicity or religion. We are convinced that the world is capable of being one big family in which fraternity is seen as the corner stone of human society supporting the whole edifice of the human race.*

*There is a Latin phrase which says *exempla trahunt* [examples attract]. It is important that you religious leaders join together and collaborate more intensely to promote good understanding, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect and love of neighbor among the members of your religious confessions. More than ever, people need leaders who are credible and ready to do all in their power to put forward their wishes and intentions successfully. You are the engine which drives the whole world, and you have the power to move hearts and mobilize people. Do not let the power you hold become weak, but make it bear fruit.*

*There is one very sad reality which exists today and which we cannot ignore, and that is the fact of migrations. Because of wars, more and more people are forced to abandon their homes, their families and their countries and to move out into the unknown, looking for the "promised land". Many of them perish in their attempt to find a quieter place and a better life, and they are confronted with barriers created by people's mentalities based on race, religion and selfishness. In your capacity as religious leaders, we beg you to find more effectively persuasive ways to help men*





*and women be more tolerant and ready to accept one another as children of the same Father. In that way, people will no longer feel obliged to leave their homelands.*

*Break down the barriers that exist between yourselves, and help the others to transform those barriers into handshakes, blessings, closer friendships and "hands stretched out" to help others.*

*With our appreciation and thanks*

**Anca and Andreea**

*Liceul Tehnologic "Sfântul Ioan de La Salle" - Romania, Pildești*

MINI  
Z  
RO





# Pastoral Ministry Brazil-Chile La Salle District

Each year, young people from the Youth Ministry of the Brazil-Chile District have a few weeks of training in different areas; we go then to vulnerable communities and there we share life with children, youth and adults. It is life that invites us to share, to grow as human beings and to make it a real place with the Gospel, full of service and happiness.







## Open Letter to World Leaders



Dear World Leaders,

You are the people we have chosen to represent us, both at home and abroad, and therefore you have an obligation to the citizens you represent to tackle, not only our national problems, but also those pertaining to our generation as well.

Today we are facing many issues as a group, but none is more serious than the high rates of depression among young people due to the stressing expectations that education and the social media are placing on our shoulders, given that nowadays letters and numbers on a page can easily define a person's value and worth.

This external pressure has steadily increased over the years because of the ongoing growth of globalization, the increasing weight of academic demands, and the corresponding expectation to succeed in life.

How can we accept the fact that every 100 minutes a teenager commits suicide?

La Salle

SINGAPORE

LEAD



*How can we accept that suicide is the third leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 24?*

*How can we accept that only 30% of teenagers who are depressed are being treated?*

*Simply put, how can we accept the crushing of our future by the sheer weight of ambition?*

*I realize that this matter might seem unimportant in relation to trumpeted issues such as global warming and overpopulation. However, it is imperative for leaders like you to address this issue, given that young people are clearly the foundation of the future and the path to a greater tomorrow.*

*I believe that the best way to address an issue of such magnitude that has virally spread throughout society is to tackle its cause, namely, the societal pressure we have mentioned, which is universal and not limited by class, race, gender or creed. To truly help young people today, I implore you, world leaders, to address this issue in a positive and proactive way. Please support us throughout your respective jurisdictions and ensure our involvement in your efforts. You will find no solution without the input from the people affected by this critical issue.*

*Best regards,*

**James Ongkauko**

St. Joseph's Institution, Singapore



A ball, some friends, and imagination: an old school child's heaven.

A screen, internet, and a comfortable seat: a modern day child's pastime.

Ever since its integration into modern society, technology has stolen the childhood that every youth deserves. Unfortunately, parents seem to be unaware of this menace abducting their children.

A true childhood is playing in the dirt, barefoot with scratches on our knees. It is the experience of falling down and standing right back up to continue an unfinished game. These are the experiences that shape us. The memories of them will make us the best possible versions of ourselves in the future.

***Text by:***

**Raymond Irani**

18 years old - Jdeideh, Lebanon

**Yara Ayoub**

18 years old - Ain el Remmeneh, Lebanon

***Picture by:***

**Hani Salem**

17 years old

Collège Notre Dame, Furn el Chebbak









### **Volunteer work as a life experience**

**An open letter to all those people who, when you mention the words 'volunteer work' to them, look at you questioningly and a bit embarrassed**

I am Lidia, and nine years ago I decided that I was going to dedicate part of my youth to volunteer work. My first big experience, and the one which started me off down this road, came when I was a monitor in the courts in my school. There I learned to love nature, to see the importance of working as a team, to be conscientious in carrying out a teaching program, and above all I learned to play, to sing, to pray, to dance and to enjoy each moment with the people around me.

I took a further step forward when I joined the Young Lasallians of Catalonia. There my volunteer activity developed, when I was part of the Young Lasallians group. We did a lot of evening work, organizing meetings for children and monitors to think up new ways of doing things. During the day, we worked on social media networks where we listened to Lasallian groups and gave them help. The aim was to make things as smooth as possible for those who followed us.

I was also a volunteer in the Proide NGO. As a group of eight young people we decided to go to Guatemala to do our best to help and to do whatever was needed. We never imagined that it would be the people we were working with who would be teaching us in so many ways. We learned to see the world from a different angle, because we got to know a style of life that was very different from our own. We learned that the voice of the people is as valuable as gold, and we came across the greatest and purest kind of happiness in the world.

It was impossible that such a positive experience would not make me want to do more volunteer work. So it was that I packed my bags and went, along with my partner, to join the one-year volunteer program of Lasallian volunteers in the United States. And that is where I am today, in Rhode Island. I am living in community with a Brother and three other volunteers. Every day, we help young people with a variety of problems in their daily lives. We are growing and learning as we enjoy living as Lasallians.

Now you know why I am a volunteer worker. You know everything that made me the person I am today. I decided to make volunteer youth work the most important part of my young years. This little part of me grows and gives, grows and gives to others, just to see their great happiness. When anybody asks me about the future for De La Salle, I close my eyes and think about all the young people it has been my good fortune to know, thanks to these experiences of volunteer work. Those young people believe in and live the message of the Founder both in their interior lives and in what they convey to those around them.

**Lidia Carreras Ochoa**  
Fundació Comtal, Barcelona, Spain



# ARLEP

For twenty-six years now, I have been living in a town called Paterna (Valencia). I am here by one of life's chances, because my family came from Cuenca. My whole life has evolved in this town. I will always remember my childhood here, and how in the afternoons I used to go out with my grandmother skipping or riding on a toboggan. Then there was the day I learned to ride a bicycle. I also remember the park where we used to play 'cops and robbers' when I was small.



Nowadays, however, all these childhood memories have turned into sadness. We were once happy playing with a piece of rope, but now we have set that aside and we need to turn to some technological device or other. The park I used to go to has now become a place for drugs and alcohol. Nobody goes there anymore, unless they have one specific idea in mind. I also recall how, when I was young, I knew the value of a duro, but now you must ask for a loan to find out what money is.

The public park has become a private reserve with "restricted access".

Nowadays, it is the young people who have to struggle, because in order to have any hope they must break through the 'ice' which is preventing them from moving forward. Without hope they cannot understand the present, neither can they prepare for the future.

All these big changes feel like a kind of death. Before someone dies, it is normal for them to become ill, that is to say someone who was living happily in a 'good' state changes to being in a 'bad' state. This 'death' means a break in your present life and a move to a different life. There is a clash between two phases, the one before and the present one that follows it. And the final point is that we have to receive an inheritance.

So we may well ask, 'what is this inheritance that we have coming to us?' It is neither more nor less than the one that is left to us by our 'elders', the ones who were once young and who worked to make this inheritance what it is.

That is why this letter is addressed to political leaders. It is they who have the mandate to change the world, but it really should go to the young people. They are the past, the present and the future. If we bring up children to be responsible and charitable, with a sense of justice and hope, we will not have to go looking for adults who are committed to society. They will be the ones to take up the baton to give direction to society.

Fortunately, we do have young people who know how to move over to the side of what they are "supposed" to do. It is thanks to the education they have received and to all the people who have accompanied them in their personal growth: their families, schools, groups of friends, plus their educational leisure times. These all make up the integrated education of the young people who will, we hope, take up 'skipping rope' and take a leap into a better world.

**Cristina Cambronero Cerrillo**  
La Salle Paterna (Valencia), Spain



# **Whatever you think about and wish for is within yourself!**

We gave a suggestive titled to this photograph: **Whatever you think about and wish for is within yourself!** It portrays a teenager who is worried about his future, aware of the fact that it is he who must take the initiative regarding his own human, professional and spiritual development, without expecting too much from others.

## **Raluca-Maria Mîrt**

**15 years old**

**Pildești, Romania**

Liceul Tehnologic “Sfantul Ioan De La Salle”









Nicholas Manning



Thomas Dunia

*Religious Leaders,*

*Born into a Catholic and Methodist family, "Hail Mary's" and "Our Father's" echoed in our minds since our earliest years. Bible schools occupied our summers and religion class followed every Sunday morning service.*

*For the entirety of our childhood, we stood silent in church as others proclaimed their belief in the "Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth," wondering if we could*

*genuinely join them in this proclamation. Jesus and other Christian figures stood before us every Sunday at church, and we sat perplexed as to the true nature of these religious routines.*

*This questioning grew alongside the access to technology and the enticement to learn about the world at large. With this longing of cultivating our curiosity, came an urge to explore and evaluate ourselves spiritually and examining where our true intimate beliefs paired with our new discoveries.*

*Thus, a world of religion and spirituality was revealed to be far greater and more diverse than we had ever been exposed to at Bible school.*

*Technology provides instant gratification, and we anticipate the instant gratification of our faith lives. We turn outward to the distractions of the Internet, rather than focusing on the more important "inward." We take for granted a spiritual journey that arguably cannot be completely fulfilled in this life, attempting to do so quickly through our research.*

*For this, the origin of our generation's new religious classification – "none" – is revealed. Thus, we are inevitably stuck at a spiritual stalemate, overwhelmed by the number of belief systems and how to immerse ourselves in their truths. Whether or not we may ever settle on one, we do not know; we are hindered by the thought that our harmony may only be found at the one faith we turned our backs on.*

*These are the struggles that we face today; and you can help!*

*Similar to Jesus challenging religious leaders of his time to authenticity – young people today yearn for leaders who practice what they preach. We want you to be compassionate, patient, and understanding when we stray, disagree, and struggle with our faith. We want you to inspire, encourage, and share in all our moments of joy on our Religious journey. Please be the role model you have been called to be and as the Holy Father says "the more powerful you are, the more your actions will have an impact on people, the more responsible you are to act humbly and to not leave individuals behind."*

*Sincerely,*

**Nicholas Manning and Thomas Dunia**

Seniors at St. Joseph's Collegiate Institute  
(Buffalo, New York, USA, Lasallian Region of North America)





*Dear leaders of the world,*

*We belong to the Lasallian Youth Movement of San Giuseppe de Merode School in Rome and, by writing these letters, we wish to join our weak voices, in the hope of becoming a strong choir.*

*Being a teenager is complicated, no matter you live in Europe or elsewhere. Contemporary society has challenged us with requirements and issues that no other generation has faced before. We are like inexperienced sailors in an*

*ocean with unknown limits. No one ever taught us to steer the boat we find ourselves on, or how and when to choose the right direction.*

*We live in Italy, a rich and developed country, without needing to choose between the opportunities we enjoy because we can have them all. But what are the consequences? Confusion! Is it fair to buy material things every day without even asking why? Is it fair to forget the past and even the present to think only about our future?*

*We are convinced that the foundations of the future lie in the present. A day will come in which we will have to decide whether we want our life to make a difference or just become a blurry shadow. We need to set the foundations for this decision now, in the present of our school days.*

*Dear leaders of the world, we would like you to notice that most teenagers usually take for granted whatever they see on the TV news, if they do. All of us are used to this indeed. But it is not right to become indifferent! It is not right to go home every day and find nice food and friendly faces without realizing, or even pretending not to see, that many people struggle the whole day for a piece of bread. It is not right to live in happiness and richness, unaware of the fact that there are children who die as soldiers and slaves, children who have lost any glint of joy in their eyes, children turned into production machines.*

*We are writing to ask you and the rest of the world to steer your own boat in the right direction despite the storm as we are trying to do, and land out of this sea of indifference. We want to be part of an active and aware generation and bring the message that achieving peace is possible. Precisely because we think it is so, we ask you to listen to us and help us by taking our hands and voices to the places we cannot reach, so that we can break down the barriers that divide people to build wonderful things of unthinkable beauty. Antoine de Saint-Exupery said: "All grown-ups were once children, but only few of them remember it". And you, do you remember the dreams you had when you were children?*

*Sincerely yours,*

**Young Lasallians**

San Giuseppe de Merode, Rome



What does loving truly mean? How can ordinary people leave the darkness of their limits and embrace a greater light? We do not know.

But, if we ever find the answer, it will be whispered by all the hearts that struggle to bring about fraternity, hearts who enjoy every single moment of their lives. We need to find people that bear a heart like this, such as these children in Scampia, whose eyes are always shining despite the shadows of indifference our society has put them through. We hope that one day we will finally be able to set our world ablaze with the same fire, the fire of peace.





# Lasallian Youth Movement. San Giuseppe De Merode School

Rome, Italy





To all those who govern our countries



Just look at our world today, exhausted by its frenetic race against time. Look down from your balconies and terraces and see the distress of a worn-out system. Being an adolescent in the West today means changing with the world and moving towards a future which is bound to get darker, if all the crises we are burdened with get any worse. Under the gaze of the leading nations who control our lives, the eternal star-covered flag has to give way to the influence of other stars whose yellow light is drowned out by red.

In my opinion, there are four crises which dominate this unstable world, and they are the social crisis, the environmental crisis, the political crisis and the economic crisis. The four are linked together, but we can begin with the first of them. Through the media which give a young westerner a window on the world, the main things we see are inequalities, violence and injustice. My words are those of someone who is an idealist on account of his age. Nevertheless, I still think that, even though all men are not equal by nature and reason makes us see the reality of the differences that start from the time we are born, the desire to move towards equality for all remains a possibility. That appears obvious to a young French person molded by his national values. Inequalities are present in our society, whether in Africa, Brazil or the streets of Shanghai. In addition to the media, direct contact can trigger awareness of the way things really are. During my years in secondary school and high school, I had the opportunity to make educational trips to several countries including China. The violent contrast between poverty and modern technology was striking. I recall walking through poor alleyways and going up some steps to have sight of the Shanghai Tower against the blue sky. At the heart of our social crisis, the responsibility of the mass media is undeniable. I think I am close to the truth when I say that for most people the goal of life is happiness. The difference between people lies in the means they have for reaching that goal. Many look to power and money; some look to human relationships and ties of friendship; others want good health and a good home. The problem today is that people can only be helpless bystanders at the sale of their desires with a false idea of a bargain purchase of happiness. One example recognised by all is that of migration. In Gabon, some homes do not even have running water, but they see it on French television. When our picture of the «ideal» is embodied in adverts and becomes for the viewers their vision of daily reality in Europe, it is easy to understand why they feel the need to break away from their poverty.

Another topic dear to me is that of democracy. My generation did not experience things like the liberation in 1945, the events of May 1968 or the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. All we know is terrorism, political uncertainty in western countries torn between unification and regionalism or nationalism, the burden of the inevitability of unemployment which weighs on people's minds. Our political system today,





therefore, appears to be responsible for numerous evils, and it is not unreasonable to call it into question. I will not dwell on the environmental crisis and the financial crisis, because I think they are obvious to everyone.

After the above list of global disasters in today's world, I would like to stress the unshakable hope and the irrepressible desire to find the right system for our society as it is. In my opinion, being a European is a great blessing, and the cultural basis shared by our countries is very strong. I sincerely believe that to really love one's nation and culture enables one to understand and respect other nationalities. In that way we find a Christian love behind a patriotic love. It seems to me that various things are lacking in the European Union today, and especially the adherence of Europeans.

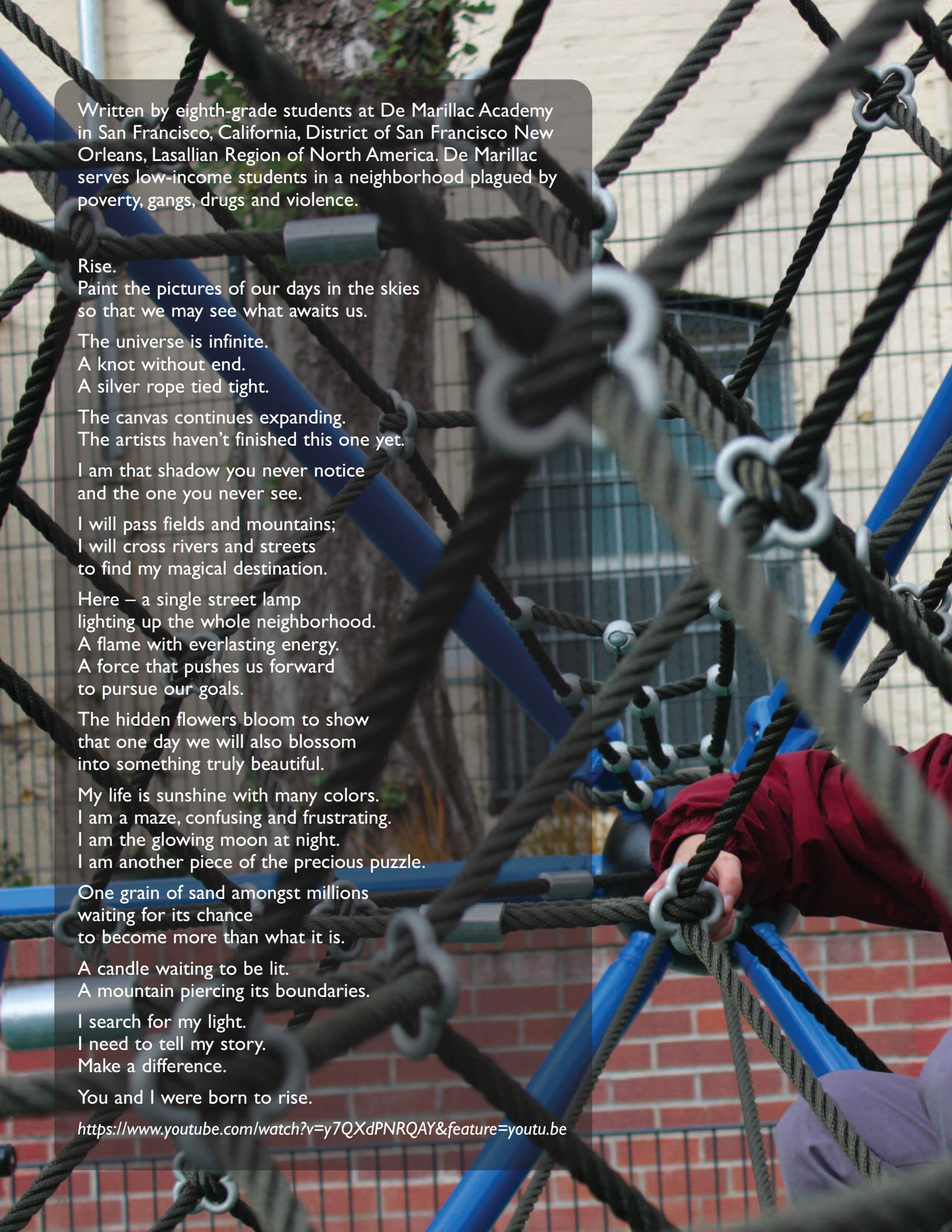
I think we have difficulty in identifying with this economic union which could become something more than just that. If a single widely-recognised individual could represent the European Union diplomatically, perhaps we could then hope to create the United States of Europe. Like Queen Elizabeth II in the United Kingdom, a non-elected individual, having little decision-making power but simply being recognised, could hold the position of head of Europe. I am thinking, for example, of Pope Francis, who is listened to and respected throughout the world. He would bring a message of tolerance and wisdom and would fit in perfectly with the cultural base of Europe. Through a real recognition of our traditional and cultural origins and of religion, perhaps the decline of certain Catholic values could lead to a general enthusiasm for human solidarity in everyday life. Nowadays the words of solidarity spoken in the past by the great altruists of our history are far from being on everybody's lips and are often quite forgotten. For too many people in fact, solidarity has become an imaginary concept appearing in the posters on buses or in the adverts that precede the main evening TV news program or in the films favored during the Cannes Festival. That is why education is important. It communicates fundamental values of solidarity, humanity, altruism and fraternity, so that this solidarity can have meaning for everyone and individuals can be of service to humanity. The idea of the Pope as the head of Europe is not something settled for me. The difficulty of reforming the Catholic Church leads to several questions. Should religion adapt itself to society? Should society adapt itself to religion? Is the decline of Catholicism in Europe definitive?

Certainly, time will provide an answer to these questions, but waiting passively for that to happen is not the solution! So let us rid ourselves of the burdens of fatalism, pessimism and obscurantism, and let us dream of tomorrow by contemplating yesterday! Young people of the world, whether you are ten or seventy, cling to your spirit of newness, love of beauty and especially love of humanity!

**Léonard Chanoni**

final year student in Le Likès La Salle, Quimper, France



A child wearing a red jacket is climbing a blue metal frame with thick black ropes. The ropes are knotted and connected to the frame. The background shows a brick wall and some greenery.

Written by eighth-grade students at De Marillac Academy in San Francisco, California, District of San Francisco New Orleans, Lasallian Region of North America. De Marillac serves low-income students in a neighborhood plagued by poverty, gangs, drugs and violence.

Rise.

Paint the pictures of our days in the skies  
so that we may see what awaits us.

The universe is infinite.  
A knot without end.  
A silver rope tied tight.

The canvas continues expanding.  
The artists haven't finished this one yet.

I am that shadow you never notice  
and the one you never see.

I will pass fields and mountains;  
I will cross rivers and streets  
to find my magical destination.

Here – a single street lamp  
lighting up the whole neighborhood.  
A flame with everlasting energy.  
A force that pushes us forward  
to pursue our goals.

The hidden flowers bloom to show  
that one day we will also blossom  
into something truly beautiful.

My life is sunshine with many colors.  
I am a maze, confusing and frustrating.  
I am the glowing moon at night.  
I am another piece of the precious puzzle.

One grain of sand amongst millions  
waiting for its chance  
to become more than what it is.

A candle waiting to be lit.  
A mountain piercing its boundaries.

I search for my light.  
I need to tell my story.  
Make a difference.

You and I were born to rise.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7QXdPNRQAY&feature=youtu.be>



A young boy with dark hair, wearing a red jacket, is climbing a rope structure. He is looking upwards and to the left with a smile. The structure consists of thick, dark ropes connected by silver metal rings. A blue horizontal bar is visible behind him. In the background, there is a brick wall and a tree trunk. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent grey box in the upper right corner.

**Eighth-grade  
students at  
De Marillac Academy  
San Francisco, California**



LASALLIAN REFLECTION N. 4 2018-2019



# LASALLIANS HEARTSONFIRE





This logo depicts Lasallians accompanying each other on their journey of service, together and by association. Each element symbolizes an important aspect of the theme, as described in Lasallian Reflection 4, to illustrate our journey and hearts full of passion for the mission.

**Path:** The path symbolizes the road to Emmaus. In journeying along this road, we experience breakthrough moments in our lives, where we find God walking alongside each of us. Walking together with the support of a community makes our journey easier.

**People:** The Brother, woman, boy and girl symbolize Brothers and Partners working together to serve young people entrusted to our care. They are posed in such a way that shows the joy they share on their journey. Their positions symbolize that while we walk at our own pace, we journey together.

**Heart:** The heart is at the center of this logo as it is at the center of the mission.

It symbolizes the pedagogy of the heart and the love we show our students.

**Sunburst:** The rays from the heart-shaped sunburst signify the way the Lasallian mission radiates throughout the world.

**Colors:** Red and orange represent fire and symbolize the passion that burns within the hearts of Lasallians.

Our special thanks to Elizabeth Moors Jodice, Director of Communications and to the RELAN Communications Team (Lasallian Region of North America) in Washington, USA, who made this logo for all Lasallians around the world.



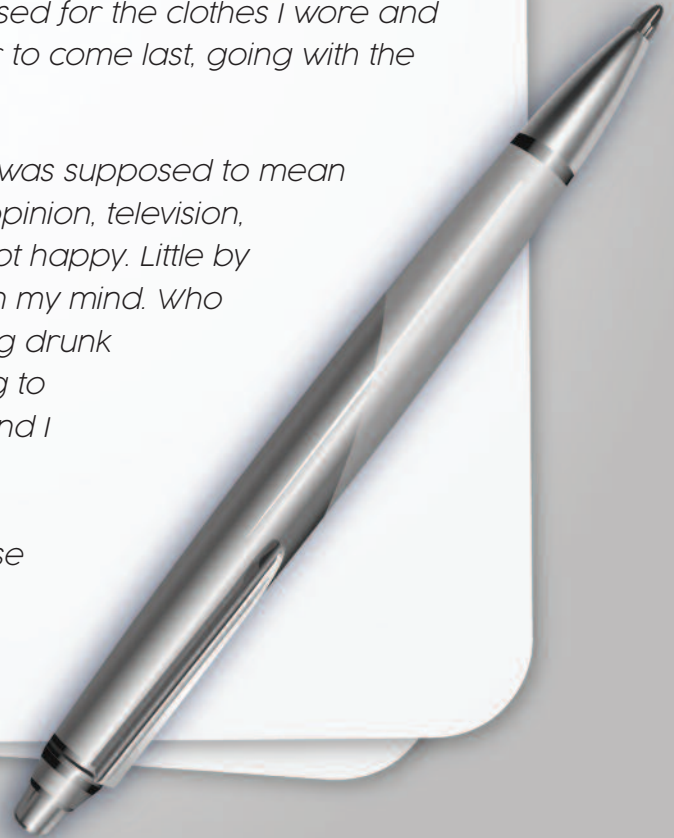


*Dear Pope Francis,*


*I never thought I would get the chance to open my heart to the world, but God surprises me more and more every day. I am writing this letter because I want to tell you something that I think is important. I want to present my life as a testimony for all young people in the Church and in the whole world. I hope that what I have to say will be plain and simple and will express the fears, challenges, hopes and feelings that go with the experience of being a young person in the 21st century.*

*First, I must explain a few things about my life. I was born in San José, Costa Rica, in 2001, and I live there with my parents and a younger sister. Since I was small, my family has inspired me with the Catholic faith, but it did not go much beyond regular Sunday Mass, praying every evening and being blessed with the sign of the cross. On the other hand, like most young people of my age, I wanted to fit in and get on well with my companions, to be praised for the clothes I wore and the way I looked, and NEVER to be alone or to come last, going with the "flow" as we say, or just being "normal".*

*In spite of the fact that I did everything that was supposed to mean "being a teenager" according to general opinion, television, publicity pictures and even science, I was not happy. Little by little, questions started to form themselves in my mind. Who am I? Why do I have to go to parties, getting drunk sometimes, doing sexy dances and listening to pornography "just because I am young"? And I thought, "Is it because I am bad? Why does nobody say anything about this? Why does everyone take pride in laughing about these things, when they are clearly destructive?"*







*I reached the point of desperation. I went to confession and I broke down in front of the priest. I recall him saying words to me that seemed to come straight from heaven. "Have you ever read the Bible?" From then on, everything changed, and I developed a deep relationship with Jesus helped by his Holy Mother.*

*Dear Rome, my sweet home! What suffering these questionings caused me as I fought against these demons on insecure ground! Until the moment when I discovered Christ. And how many others are going through the same experience and are becoming even more confused? The world and the times in which many of us young people live are becoming ever more complex and difficult.*

*Young people, do not be afraid of holiness in everyday life. It brings true joy.*

*Fight for us, Holy Father. Do not leave us in this terrible shadow that is becoming increasingly darker. We beg you, teach us the TRUTH.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

**Giuliana Lanzoni Domian**

Colegio La Salle, Costa Rica

COSTA RICA



# Cintia Moreno Martín

26 years old

Paterna (Valencia), Spain





Enthusiasm, joy, commitment, community, faith and service. These are the words that moved this group of young Lasallians to live the international volunteer project called *Little People* (Gente Pequeña). These very words also bring hope to the thousands of young people who participate in the program. “*Be the change you want to see in the world!*” (Mahatma Gandhi).





*Dear Leaders,*

*All our experiences, actions, and missions, are shared by all Lasallians. For this reason, we can never forget our moments. We can never forget our fears, our struggles, especially our power that made our victory.*

*As young Lasallians, we should deliver our values to all people as possible, that's why, involving people in our schools - in various activities such as spiritual activities, celebrations, etc. is essential. That's how we become an example of unity, oblivious to the boundaries of our place.*

*Furthermore, we think that there must be a dialogue around the world whether through social media or in Lebanon or any other country. The necessity is the exchange of ways of dealing with children in our schools, faith and service, and to recognize our brothers and sisters, goals, principles, and freedom. In this way, we become Lasallians without borders.*

*Another thing to bear in mind is that meeting you, our Leaders, will be such a great honor. Eventually, it is necessary to meet our exemplars so we could learn more from them and seek more like them.*

*After all we can never forget that we are "All united in One Heart, in One Family, and we are here to SERVE!"*



embody the essence of true  
get our camps full of wonderful  
anxieties, our tears and

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**Jessica George Eid**



LEBANON









Students of La Salle Tan Hung Charity School participating in the swimming training program. This 2-month program is a free educational activity provided by an American pastor who also offers free English tutoring for our students in his English Center 3 days per week.

# La Salle Tan Hung Charity School Vietnam



To the world leaders, to the leaders of France,



I think it is important, first of all, that you know who these words you are reading come from. Who am I? You might be interested in my age: I just turned sixteen. I can already hear the comments: "Ah, but she's just a teenager...!" Let's leave these ideas aside, shall we? We must stop considering children and adolescents as half-people. One day we will be citizens as you are; we are the citizens of tomorrow. The Rights of the Child have evolved as much as Human Rights over the centuries, so let us follow this idea of progress! Listen to our voice, without judging us by our scarce experience due to age. We will try not to judge you either, although our ways of seeing things sometimes differ very much... This relationship can only work if there is mutual respect, which, I believe, is really lacking in recent times, both in the high political spheres and in the streets of our cities. Let us talk, for we have a lot to tell each other.

Let us hear each other, because we want to build the future together with you.

Let us listen to each other, for we will have to assume the world that you will pass on to us.

I will bring to the table some topics that, in my opinion, are essential and should be at the heart of the debates. What you are going to read is a personal account of the thoughts and convictions that inspire me, and I dare to hope that my comrades across France and the world – even if our opinions diverge – think along the same lines.

For you, dear leaders, it is now time to go back a few years in time and put yourselves in the shoes of teenagers, of the child you once were. Go back to your sixteen-year-old self. Take some time to remember the convictions you had at that age. Remembering who we were is fundamental if we intend to lead others. Because how can we decide what is good or not for others without putting ourselves in the place of the people concerned?

**How can we make decisions that affect a country without understanding what it needs?**

This principle applies to all scales, from the world to the family. There is nothing worse than an adult who has forgotten the child that he or she once was.

What did you want to do then?

Nothing?

Change the world?

Become President?

And what have you done to this day?

Some people have pursued and fulfilled their dream; others did not have the chance. The whims of life, as they say.

I myself want to build the world of tomorrow. I want everyone to have an opportunity to fulfil his or her dreams. It looks very nice on paper. It sounds good indeed. Why not try to make it happen? I want to make things happen. Together we can make things happen if each of us commits to the task.

First, let's take a look at schools, a subject I know well. I am in the penultimate year of high school at a private institute of Paris. It is a privilege, I know. However, beware of what follows: I have already lost count of the oral exams, quizzes, high school exams and others. Stress is permanent, since we are subject to constant assessment. We must follow methods predefined by people who have not set foot in a classroom for a long time. Ask teachers and especially **students** what they think about this! They are the most affected, and yet they must comply with measures that do not suit them. Our world has changed, so why is the school system the same as in the past?

You must know how to get down to reality, my dear leaders, to know what life is all about nowadays. We must understand the present situation of our society, which seems quite muddled to me. To get out of this mud, let us change strategies once and for all! We will never make change happen by demotivating the younger generations, making them lose any esteem for their elders, and imposing an obsolete system on them. In this way change will not go in the right direction to become positive. A video that explains this matter better than me comes to my mind: watch Prince Ea's videoclip on the school system, I share his opinion on this issue.

Of course, not everything should be thrown away in the French school system, and there are schools that are an exception – I am thinking of some primary and secondary schools, but no high schools spring to mind... These are schools where the grading system has been redesigned or suppressed,

FRANCE



which has had exceptional results. There are certainly other ways to learn and teach! How difficult can it be to generalize a system that works? It is not by bombarding us with minor reforms that the system will work, no, we must see the bigger picture. Presently we are on the right track, thanks to very recent changes that are going in this direction. **But we must keep going.**

If we want a world of citizens who can think about what is best for them and for all, there **MUST** be a willingness to learn and not to be carried away by the crowd. We must develop people's free will, the values of respect and freedom, so that they can claim their rights, but above all, fulfill their **duties**: this is in theory – and must be in practice – the primary mission of the school. But I have the impression that it has rather been forgotten: the hours of civic education are becoming more and more rare in my school schedule, and sometimes are even ignored.

Teach us what society is, teach us what the world is, and we will be able to identify what is wrong according to our different viewpoints, and what needs to be changed.

Other European countries have much better school systems than ours. So tell me, you who have now the power to change things through reforms that are worthwhile: what is the use of sticking to positions that lead nowhere? Nobody likes school today. It is ridiculous! Learning is one of the most beautiful things in life; learning makes us evolve. So why is it that most of us have our stomachs in knots when we get up in the morning?

Let us move on to the next stage of learning: active life. Is school properly preparing us to enter adult life? No! our studies are detached from the world of work. There are examples of this in every family.

Now we are almost coming of age and will become full citizens. We want to be agents of the future. It is said that young people are not interested in politics: this is false, a thousand times false! What happens is that we are disappointed by today's politics. It is the same as twenty years ago, nothing moves, nothing evolves. Reforms pass under one president but the next is ready to ignore them. **We are fed up** with this frozen political scene. We are not interested in it, so we turn away and do not try to understand it anymore. It is as simple as that!

We need new blood, new ideas and, above all, institutions that know how to flow. We need an institutional France that implements new measures leading towards an ideal of society that we need to keep in mind. The notion of ideal politics and actual politics we mentioned above is relevant. We basically live – together with you leaders – in a democracy. As Churchill said: "democracy is the worst form of government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time". So, let us stay in this system, getting as close as possible to the ideal without ever reaching it.

It is time to conclude this reflection with another question: what am I asking you to do?

To pay attention to us, so that we can listen to each other.

To carry out effective reforms and lead them to the end.

To leave room for others. Let us desacralize the political career! It is not a matter of carrying on as much as possible, but of serving the nation for a limited period.

To make us love our country, to help us become interested in what is happening on the political scene. Seek our advice and support, and we will help you as much as possible.

To keep our countries and cultures alive.

To make us overcome this atmosphere of anxiety that is creeping into our hearts because of stupid wars.

To get us out of this crisis, to bring about a new world that is better for all at all levels.

To preserve our planet, to protect it from us and from our foolishness. It is our house, and we are destroying it little by little each day.

I have pointed out a lot of things... And although I thought I would have a thousand more things to tell you, I am now feeling wordless. How can we put into writing what should be done and lived?

It is a hard task we entrusted you with when we elected you as leaders: concretely doing what we implicitly ask for – perhaps a bit more explicitly sometimes, like in this letter. I realize that, and am aware of your efforts.

I encourage you to carry on with them, for you, for us, for the sake of all.

And we have reached the end of this letter, if you read it to the end.

About all these matters, dear leaders, I hope to see what you are capable of doing. And, for now, I respectfully greet you.

**Estelle Rodela,**

Francs-Bourgeois School, Paris









“Christmas is an important celebration for us every year. Although we have children from more than 40 cultural groups, we like to celebrate Christmas together. We tell the Christmas story, drink hot soup, and listen and dance to Christmas music played live by local volunteers. These little things make our Christmas celebration a warm, welcoming, joyful and peaceful gathering year after year”.

**Marth De Smet**  
**Antwerpen, Belgium**





*Esteemed world leaders and media-artists,*

*During our adolescence, we spend a long time being taught many things. However, we do not learn anything we are taught unless we clearly and consciously decide what we want to learn, almost forcing ourselves to do so. And this learning takes place not only in school but also through what we observe and experience in our everyday lives. We feel things very intensely and we try to find many different ways to express our emotions. Sometimes we think we are*

*unstoppable and can do almost anything. At other times we feel as fragile as glass. Our life is a continual search for a reason for living. We all believe that God has a plan for us in his own good time, and in the meantime we can find that reason for living in our studies and in things that we are crazy about, like games or art and music. We may even find it through love. At the same time, some of us find that our lives are greatly influenced by people we admire and dream of meeting some day. At some time or another, we have all felt inspired by the stories of those who have made it and who, in spite of the adversities they have had to face, have been able to become the media-artists and idols that they are today.*

*Because of all that, I am writing this letter in the name of all young people to appeal to you pop-artists throughout the world. Be models and examples for us! You have the ability to inspire us and even to change our lives. In an age that is as media-centered as ours is and where bad news spreads in a flash, we want you to be the ones who will show us that it is still possible to hope for a better world. Many of us begin every morning by listening to your songs in the hope of finding a motive to face the day with enthusiasm and readiness. Some of us fall asleep looking at your films until the early hours of the morning, even though we know that later we will have to go to class. You are ever present in our daily lives. Not only do we admire you, we identify with you, because at one time or another you have shown us an idea of what we want to achieve in our lives.*

*I am certain that you, as media-artists, can be the agents of change that the world needs and hopes to find. With hand on heart and from the depth of my being, I beg you to ensure that your presence among us will be a source of good for us young people. With the help of God and with your help as our guides, we can be inspired and motivated to bring together our millions of voices to have the positive impact which the world needs.*

**Camilo David Orozco Siu**

Instituto Pedagógico La Salle, Managua, Nicaragua





To the politicians of the world,

*In this letter, I want to tell you what we young people think about what we see in today's society. We may like to hide the fact, but it is difficult not to see that nowadays the world is in a state of collapse. There are disputes, threats, wars, famine, poverty, unemployment, greed for power and money. Materialism and individualism flourish everywhere, while human values and feelings have disappeared. It is a society without moral standards and the source of all this is*

*the absence of any 'fear of God'. As a young person, and speaking as I believe for all young people, the thought that this is the kind of world that is in store for us fills us with terror, and at the same time it disheartens us. Nevertheless, even though humanity today is in this mess, we should not think that everything is lost. One thing is certain, "hope is the last thing to be lost". And personally, I still have it.*

*There are still people today who are working for change in society, and Pope Francis is one example of this. He is aware that it is we young people who are the future, and it is still possible to mend the damage, if we summon up our strength and energy. The legacy of this young generation will be to take these experiences even further. There are still people who prepare us from an early age to become those who will bring about the metamorphosis of the world and make it a better place. That precisely is the main challenge faced by young people today: to change the world. Life does not stop. We young people are just starting, and we shall continue to fight and to maintain hope in our hearts, struggling to bring about that change. However, I have to say that we cannot do it alone. We need the help of the major sources of influence to achieve it, using the material to effect the spiritual. And it is this help that I am asking for. Let us have once again gentle hearts full of love for our neighbor, let us rediscover the fear of God, values, mutual help, unity; let us be reborn as new individuals, human once more. Let us strive to be the ray of light that shines out continually and brightly in all the darkness.*

*In conclusion, you as a political leader should ask yourself the following questions: What contribution am I making for bringing about this positive change in our society? What legacy will I provide for the young people of tomorrow, who include my own children?*

*With cordial greetings,*

**Thomas Enrique Orozco Quintanilla**

Instituto Pedagógico La Salle, Managua, Nicaragua



# Carolina González Jiménez

15 years old

San José, Costa Rica

Colegio de La Salle, San José, Costo Rica

My experience: I had the opportunity to carry out my social-service work at the Carlos María Ulloa home for the elderly. This experience was full of joy and positive feelings. I am very grateful for all the things God allowed me to live next to the residents of this center.









*Hello sir, please excuse me for the delay, here is my open letter to the leaders of the world:*

*What is a young person today? We can say: someone at an early age with a new spirit who only wants to develop. But reality is much more complex than that. Indeed, many "young people" are no longer so because they live difficult family situations, or must see things that are beyond their grasp, or find themselves in precarious conditions without the possibility of experiencing a rich and complete life. Therefore, if we want to talk about young people's life we will need a nuanced look at reality.*

*It is said that 50, 100, 250 years ago and further, young people had more responsibilities than nowadays. It is true that agricultural work and household chores were their duties; otherwise they jeopardized their family circle and its balance. Indeed, today's Western young people no longer see life this way: they let their parents "carry them" and, in most cases, guide them throughout the "important" decisions regarding school, the choice of friends, and in most resolutions, as innocuous as they may be. They even become kept boys and girls.*

*Yet the reality of Western young people is quite different from this mindset that perceives them as an economic burden to whom everything must be served on a silver platter. Indeed, the weight on young people's shoulders is always heavier. The world is competitive, you must stand out, and getting good grades is the only way for an ordinary youngster in France to do this. Consequently, there is a "grades race" aimed at choosing your future already in high school, at deciding what your life will be like for the time you have left to live, for your lifetime. But this is normal: a world where 7 billion individuals coexist cannot offer a place for everyone. This is a real problem, because many people feel abandoned, left behind without knowing what to do. There is only place for winners in this world. However, there can be no winners without losers.*

*We must therefore keep in mind the people who have not been favored by luck, who were not motivated to be resolute, who have not succeeded despite their tenacity. We must therefore reinvent our model of society, so that it can take better account of the excluded, because a person going adrift can cause the loss of many others... And if we improve this, the whole chain of society will be improved, for the weakest link will be strengthened.*



*Young people who are ready to hit the road with the head full of dreams, but who have also experienced failure, will be more able to succeed because they have been enriched by their personal stories. Our hope regarding education in France is focused on a better integration of young people in the so-called Priority Education Zones; in Europe, on a welcoming attitude towards young refugees who only want peace and education; and in the world, on the construction of social integration centers, developing an exchange network between them, as well as on the inclusion of immigrants who have no means, so that they can be enriched by our cultures, which are new to them, and eventually, who knows, become true geniuses. The consequences of this on economy and employment can only be good.*

*We are witnessing a change, a click, a new willingness in our leaders, but it is not enough yet. I then ask you, leaders of the world, to be kind enough to take our reflections with the best of attentions, because the future is ours, and we want a better future. We look for a better world indeed, in which failing will not be wrong, and cohesion among young people will be stronger than ever, so that we can ensure that the generations of tomorrow will have the same chance that we have to enjoy peace and find food on our plates.*

**Paul Cano**

Le Likès High School, Quimper, France

#FRANCE



## Lasallian Youth in Kenya: an example of active citizenship



This vocational training has proved to be one of the main factors of poverty reduction in the area, as it allows students to quickly join a skilled workforce and settle down economically in their own community. These fields of specialization, in fact, intend to meet the needs of the regional economy's expanding sectors.

Mwangaza College pays great attention to women – who are often excluded from

The students of Mwangaza College Nakuru, Kenya, are an example of concrete and firsthand commitment. Monitored by Brother Oscar and their teachers, they actively promote fundamental values, such as peace and the rights of minors.

Periodically, a group of volunteers from the College visits the district's juvenile prison and offers animation and support through a literacy and basic schooling program.

Once a year, in conjunction with the International Lasallian Day for Peace, a large delegation from the school – comprising students, teachers and parents, coordinated by the Mwangaza Student Council – parades

through the city of Nakuru manifesting for peace. These young men and women hence proactively live the spirit of service, one of the key Lasallian values that the educational community of Mwangaza upholds.

Mwangaza College, founded 42 years ago by the Lasallian Brothers, is now a vocational training center at the service of more than 500 disadvantaged students, mainly young women.

It provides four types of courses, ranging between 6 and 24 months: beauty and cosmetics, gastronomy and catering, fashion and design, accounting and management (sales and marketing, secretariat studies, and information technology).

secondary education by society – and offers them the opportunity to fulfill themselves and become active subjects of their country's development.

Today the number of applications to study at Mwangaza College is growing, which implies improving the facilities, especially the rainwater collection capacity, and renewing the laboratories and the professional kitchen equipment.

We at the De La Salle Solidarietà Internazionale ONLUS (De La Salle International Solidarity NGO) – a non-profit organization created by the Brothers of the Christian Schools' Solidarity and Development Secretariat in Rome as its legal arm – are



working hard to ensure that the improvements the school needs can be completed within a reasonable time. We are achieving this goal thanks to the support from several partners, such as ACTEC NGO (Belgium), NPO LS SCOLA FUND (Japan), and ConSidera (Italy). Our fundraising effort is at the service of the project's purpose, namely, to carry on with a quality professional education that keeps up with the times and allows our students to easily join the world of work, and to achieve water self-sufficiency, reducing expenses and making the most of the natural resources that are available.

At the same time, we want to take advantage of the project



that will make the water supply system more efficient to sensitize the new generations of Nakuru about the need to take care of natural resources, promoting sustainability awareness through the conservation of rainwater and other resources.

This project at Mwangaza College in Kenya is part of a

broader venture which we at International Solidarity work on every day, that is, being at the service of Lasallian centers that are dealing with children and young people in situations of vulnerability.

By networking with Lasallian development and solidarity organizations from the different continents, we are implementing global and local strategies and trying to tackle current problems in order to build a sustainable future for the next generations of adults, taking care of their development today.

To learn more about this and other projects, follow our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/delasalle.onlus>







# RELAN







# RELAN





**1.** This photo that I took on Saddle Mountain on the Oregon Coast reminds me of the struggles we have to surmount in our everyday lives as youth in America. As we worry about our future after high school we feel like we are always climbing a mountain and we will never reach the summit.

Amanda Acker, Portland, Oregon, USA

**2.** We dress to fit in, we take photos to look perfect, and we gain hundreds of followers to be popular. But when we were younger, we didn't care about others' opinions. We ran like nobody was watching, we dressed for comfort, and we did what made us happy.

Eric Nguyen, Milwaukie, OR - USA

**3.** This photo represents the youthful and energetic spirit that the world's younger generations all hold within themselves. The background can be used to represent the inner feelings that are shown. Children are full of light and beauty. It was taken at Long Beach, Washington.

Emma K. Kuffner, Milwaukie, OR - USA

**4.** Taken at Camp Namanu after a session of outdoor school, this photo is of me and other people who all dedicate their time to the education of 6<sup>th</sup> graders.

Bao Huynh, Milwaukie, OR - USA

**5.** This picture represents the joy and opportunity high school students are able to have. We get the opportunity every year to compete for a state championship and make our school proud. While during season it is stressful to manage both basketball and school work, it is rewarding when we can see our hard work pay off.

Hannah N. Sisul - Milwaukie OR - USA

**6.** I took this photo of Jonah Wolf '19 during an art class. It represents determination and talent. Jonah is one of the best artists I know and capturing him in his creative mindset really was a challenge. This was captured during a color study of a piece he later would paint onto a life-sized canvas.

Nicholas Sibol, Maryland, USA

**7.** This photo represents happiness and love with four lifelong friends. I met these friends when I was in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and remained friends with them until we were in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. I moved to a different high school, but we have remained close and still care about each other!

Megan E. Lyver, Milwaukie, OR - USA

**8.** This picture represents the inherent curiosity that I have for the world around me. This curiosity is what made me wonder what a photo would look like through a piece of ice. I nearly froze my hand off in the process, but it was well worth it.

Stephen Leeb, Milwaukie, OR - USA

**9.** For me, this photo represents contentment because it was taken in my home country, Vietnam, when we took a boat trip in the morning. I was so captivated by the beautiful country that I get to call my home.

Alexis Han, Milwaukie, Oregon, USA

**10.** This photo shows a young woman looking into the distance, happy with what she sees and prepared for the future.

Dylan Jackson, Milwaukie, Oregon-USA

**11.** We Lasallians serve and help the people in need.

Ernest Quah, La Salle College, Kowloon, Hong Kong



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